

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2005

Contact: Ellen Qualls Kathy Glazer, VDSS
Phone: (804) 786-2211, x2379 (804) 726-7120
Cell Phone: (804) 393-9429
Internet: <http://www.governor.virginia.gov>

GOVERNOR WARNER ANNOUNCES EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

*~Education for a Lifetime Preschool initiative targets community-grown,
comprehensive programs~*

RICHMOND - Governor Mark R. Warner today announced the recipients of the competitive Early Childhood Partnership grants. Grantees are local coalitions that have proposed initiatives to strengthen their communities' ability to provide high-quality early education and school readiness programs. A total of \$1.5 million in federal money has been awarded to three partnerships.

The grants are a component of Governor Warner's Education for a Lifetime preschool initiative. Early Childhood Partnership grants were targeted to community-based organizations which can demonstrate an ability to bring together people and organizations on a local or regional level to create a comprehensive system of early care and education for young children.

"Investing in high-quality early childhood education has extraordinary returns, not only for Virginia's children, but also for our workforce and economy," said Governor Warner. "The best investments are made in community-grown programs that truly meet local needs."

Receiving grants funds of \$500,000 each are **Fairfax County Office for Children, South Hampton Roads Coalition for Early Childhood** and the **Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education in Williamsburg**. Within each of these initiatives, local stakeholders have designed and developed a comprehensive infrastructure that supports quality early education and school readiness at the local level. Each applicant was required to bring a match of \$250,000 from the local community.

While 15 applications were received by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), the three awardees clearly stood out in terms of the required committed leadership, excellence in innovative program design and sustainability. Grant recipients will be spotlighted at the Governor's Early Childhood Summit at the end of May.

“Community investment in early learning is smart business,” said Gary Massie, President of Jack L. Massie Contractors, Inc. in Williamsburg. “And the opportunity for the corporate community to learn from these model initiatives at the Governor’s Summit will provide maximum benefit to the Commonwealth.”

“The strength and variety of early childhood initiatives growing across the Commonwealth are impressive,” said VDSS Commissioner Maurice Jones. “We see each applicant as a winner. Virginia will benefit from all of these efforts.”

The grants, which are two years in duration, are funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund, with the goal of helping children enter school ready to learn.

#